**Presentation (15 minutes) – Low-risk women over 35 should be treated as low-risk**

Australian women are starting a family later in life for many reasons. These include choosing to establish a career first, seeking financial stability as a priority, experiencing fertility issues when they do attempt to consciously conceive or simply just continuing their childbearing years. A quarter of pregnant Australian women are over the age of 35, with 30.7 years old being the average age when they become a first-time mother.

In the Australian maternity care system, if women are over the age of 35, this is perceived as a risk. With research siting that the inherent aspects of ageing as a female mean that you are more likely to develop co-morbidities or have an increased likelihood of developing other risks in pregnancy.

This narrative has profound impacts on the psychological aspects of preparing for childbirth, leaving women in doubt of their bodies.

We must remember this key point of Professor Hannah Dahlen’s, from Western Sydney University, “While statistically, women over the age of 35 are more likely to develop diabetes and high blood pressure, you can have very unhealthy, overweight 23-year-olds, and very healthy 35 or 40-year-olds with none of those health conditions.”

The advantages of having babies later in life that are yet to be explored in great depth and this policy proposes the best way to start this journey is to treat low-risk women over the age of 35 as low risk.

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